

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 AID-05  
/059 W

-----042245Z 027920 /73

P R 041825Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3557

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 1035

E.O. 11652: N/A

UNCLAS. MARCH 4. IN A SPECIAL BULLETION RELEASED YESTERDAY EVENING BY THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARIAT AND CARRIED BY TODAY'S MORNING PAPERS, THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THE CLOSING OF LA CRONICA, SMALL CIRCULATION (7,000) LEFTIST DAILY WHICH HAS LONG SPOKEN OUT AGAINST CERTAIN GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS. THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION IN CLOSING DOWN THE PAPER WAS LINKED TO LEGISLATIVE DECREE NO. 209 OF FEBRUARY 28 WHICH DECLARED A "STATE OF SIEGE" (SUSPENSION OF CIVIL AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES) IN THE WAKE OF POST ELECTION DISTURBANCES. THE BULLETIN STATED THAT LA CRONICA HAD FAILED TO PURSUE "HONEST AND OBJECTIVE REPORTING AND REVERTED TO YELLOW, SENSATIONALIST, AND EXAGGERATED COVERAGE OF EVENTS, CONDUCT WHICH WAS AGAINST NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC PEACE."

THE GOVERNMENT'S BULLETIN EMPHASIZED THE "DESIRE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO RESPECT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID APPLYING THE RESTRICTIONS PROVIDED FOR IN THE "LEGISLATIVE) DECREE." HOWEVER, LA CRONICA "VIOLATED PROVISIONS OF THIS DECREE AND DEFIED ESTABLISHED ORDER."

LA CRONICA'S OWNER-EDITOR, DR. JOSE NAPOLEON GONZALEZ, FOUNDED THE PAPER IN 1968 AND OPERATED ON A SHOESTRING UNTIL CIRCULATION  
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BUILT UP TO INCLUDE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND LABOR. HE CLAIMS TO BE THIRD WORLD ORIENTED AND CONCERNED WITH "WORLD ISSUES NOT NECESSARILY LINKED TO ANY SINGLE IDEOLOGY." MANY RECENT EDITORIALS HAVE DEALT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS THEMES.

LA CRONICA'S MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY ISSUES PLAED UP OPPOSITION COALITION CLAIMS OF ELECTORAL FRAUD AND CLAIMED THAT

IT WAS THE ONLY PAPER TO "TELL THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE TRAGIC  
(POST ELECTION) EVENTS."

COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT'S ABRUPT CLOSING OF LA CRONICA BORDERS  
ON THE MISTERIOUS SINCE THE PAPER'S COVERAGE OF POST ELECTION  
DEVELOPMENTS HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN INFLAMMATORY. GIVEN  
PRESIDENT MOLINA'S CONCERN WITH INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM  
OF HIS REGIME AND HIS PROFESSED DESIRE TO HELP BUILD HIS COUNTRY'S  
IMAGE, IT IS STRANGE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CLOSE DOWN A SMALL  
TIME PAPER WHICH DOES NOT PLAY AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN SHAPING  
PUBLIC OPINION AND HAS NOT REALLY OVERSTEPPED THE GUIDE-  
LINES OF DECREE 209. EDITOR-OWNER GONZALEZ VISITED PAO THIS MORN-  
ING TO ASK ASSISTANCE IN VISITING HIS SON AND DAUGHTER IN THE  
U.S. UNTIL "THINGS CALM DOWN." HE BELIEVES THE PAPER WILL  
BE ALLOWED TO RENEW PUBLISHING WHEN STATE OF SIEGE IS LIFTED.  
HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT AS YET RECEIVED AN ASSURANCES FROM OFFICIAL  
SOURCES TO THIS EFFECT.

GRIFFITHS

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
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**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009